

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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THE POST-DISPATCH PLATFORM

I KNOW THAT MY RETIREMENT WILL MAKE NO DIFFERENCE IN ITS CARDINAL PRINCIPLES THAT IT WILL ALWAYS FIGHT FOR PROGRESS AND REFORM, NEVER TOLERATE INJUSTICE OR CORRUPTION, ALWAYS FIGHT DEMAGOGUES OF ALL PARTIES, NEVER BELONG TO ANY PARTY, ALWAYS OPPOSE PRIVILEGED CLASSES AND PUBLIC PLUNDERERS, NEVER LACK SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR, ALWAYS REMAIN DEVOTED TO THE PUBLIC WELFARE, NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH MERELY PRINTING NEWS, ALWAYS BE DRAMATICALLY INDEPENDENT, NEVER BE AFRAID TO ATTACK WRONG, WHETHER BY PREDATORY PLUTOCRACY OR PREDATORY POVERTY.

April 10, 1907

The Generals Speak

There is a definite and far from pleasing picture beginning to emerge from the congressional defense hearings. Secretary of Defense Gates and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Nathan Twining, how to the Administration line that all is well—except the adverse criticism. Much of the criticism has come from subordinates such as Gen. Thomas Power, chief of the Strategic Air Command.

Some of the Senators listening to the testimony doubtless have almost as much factual data as the witnesses. They are seeking to learn how these men interpret the facts, the intelligence data and the deductions that can be made from them. If Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, Gen. Twining, Gen. Power or any of several other top men failed in their assigned mission the failure could be responsible for something worse than a Pearl Harbor. It is up to Gen. Power, in particular, to compensate with SAC for the missile gap of which there has been so much warning in the last two or three years.

It is Gen. Power's testimony, supported in part by that of Gen. White and Gen. Bernard Schriever, Air Force research chief, that has stood out sharply against the all-is-well school. Gen. Power first says that the cornerstone of our national defense—the security of our retaliatory forces—

It is his SAC, in the midst of a rapid transition from bomber to intercontinental ballistic missile, which constitutes almost 90 per cent of the free world's retaliatory force. It must balance the growing missile lead which so many experts have credited to Moscow. It seems certain to remain our strongest weapon until the solid-fueled Polaris and Minuteman are operational and can be counted on to give us a mobile and much stronger defense setup.

Gen. Power spoke freely to the Senators. He said, "As a field commander I feel we should take care of the worst possible situation." Yet he conceded that his superiors might reach different conclusions because the superiors had wider responsibilities than he.

But Gen. Maxwell Taylor, who retired last June as Army Chief of Staff, gave the Senators a different and more alarming reason for the views of these superiors. Enlarging on his recent book, "The Uncertain Trumpet," Gen. Taylor charged that budget-minded civilians had taken over military policy-making. While most of what he said supported Gen. Power's warning that we are growing weaker while Russia grows stronger, Gen. Taylor did disagree with Gen. Power in testifying, "Our manned bomber force is a dwindling military asset." But he did assert it should go on a partial airborne alert, as Gen. Power advocated.

Having so recently been a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Taylor is a witness whose testimony is of the highest importance. His emphasis on the need for ability to fight limited and non-atomic wars as well as nuclear wars echoes the old warning that if we cannot stop limited aggressions in far corners there is a good chance of the free world being devoured piecemeal. There can be little doubt that he is on sound ground in citing the inadequacy of the National Security Council. This highest policy advisory group in the Government apparently has failed so badly in its mission of integrating strategic policies that it has been under a Senate subcommittee investigation since last August.

Gen. Lemnitzer, who succeeded Gen. Taylor in the army post, differed with his predecessor on some points. He thought the United States was in a good position to fight a limited war, for example. But he said the Budget Bureau has refused to permit expenditure of most of \$66 million dollars voted by Congress to provide new equipment for American soldiers supporting Gen. Taylor's view of the decisive power exercised by the Budget Bureau.

Although there have been semantics, challenges, politics and varied interpretation to confuse the issue, it is clear that our defense establishment is not all it should be. Consideration for the budget has caused us to fall behind. As Walter Lippmann commented this week on the Soviets: "Not only did they have a head start but they are now running faster." If we are to catch up, Congress must act decisively on the information it is uncovering.